

Teaching Students with Conductive Hearing Loss

Some facts:

- Studies indicate that up to 93% of indigenous students have at one time suffered from chronic Otitis Media and associated, fluctuating hearing loss.
- The prevalence is up to 10 times the rate found in non-Indigenous people.
- You can assume that at any given time, about 50% of students in your class will have a hearing loss.
- There do not have to be physical signs.
- Conductive hearing loss impacts on language learning.

What is Otitis Media?

Otitis Media is a middle ear infection that causes conductive hearing loss. The eustachian tube gets blocked causing a build up of fluid in the middle ear. This alone can stop sound getting through properly. If untreated, it can result in the eardrum perforating.

What causes Otitis Media?

Infections such as colds and viruses cause OM. The general health and hygiene of students can impact on this.

Teaching strategies:

- Say the child's name first to help get their attention.
- Say it in a different way gets the message across.
- Speak normally to help the child work out what you are saying.
- Keep the classroom quiet – turn off the radio etc.
- Get close to the students to make your voice louder. Don't yell.
- Use visual aids, gestures, and concrete materials.
- Turn the lights on and face the students when you are speaking.
- Teach specific listening/speaking activities.
- Run daily "Nose blowing/healthy kids programs".
- Look in student files for information about hearing tests.

Classroom acoustics:

- Turn fans and air conditioners off during intensive language lessons.
- Put carpet on the floor and curtains on the windows.
- Glue felt onto the bottom, and inside, pencil tins.
- Remember, hard surfaces reflect sound. Use pin-boards, children's work, and egg cartons to absorb sound.
- Do not put children who have hearing loss near windows.
- Make rules like "One person speaks" or "Lift chairs".
- Do a deal – have a spot outside for children to 'drum'.
- Make sure all chairs and tables have rubber stoppers.

Contact: Steve Nankivell Advisory Teacher Conductive Hearing on **89738912** or **steve.nankivell@nt.gov.au**
for more information, teaching strategies, assistance, resources etc.